



SESAME

Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East

Opening of SESAME 16 May 2017

Statement by Ms Irina Bokova Director-General of UNESCO



Your Royal Highness Princess Sumaya,
Sir Chris Llewellyn Smith,
Professor Khaled Toukan,
My Dear Colleague Director-General Yukiya Amano,
Director General Fabiola Gianotti,
Commissioner Carlos Moedas,
Professor Rolf Heuer,
Ministers and Experts,

I am very honoured and happy to be with you. Many of you spoke about dreams coming true. I believe we are witnessing such a moment.

The opening of SESAME is the result of long years of work, patience, commitment and responsibility, but above all it is the result of a vision shared by a few pioneers, who met some 20 years ago at UNESCO, to launch this project.

This vision is now a world-class research laboratory, which is a leap forward for scientific research in the region.

It is also a leap forward for science diplomacy, building bridges among neighbours, which have their share of differences, and decided to unite for the search of scientific truths and the betterment of the life of their peoples.

I wish to pay tribute to SESAME, and all its Members and partners, which has already become a large platform for scientific cooperation and exchange.

I wish to thank his Majesty King Abdullah II for his unfailing commitment, as well as Jordan and the scientific community of Jordan. It is this same commitment that underlies Jordan's hosting of the World Science Forum next November, which is to be the first in the series to be held in the region.

As Director-General, I am proud that UNESCO gave birth to SESAME, and I wish to also pay tribute to my predecessors Federico Mayor and Koïchiro Matsuura and their teams, who played a vital role in its success.

The opening of SESAME embodies UNESCO's vision at its best.

It is for such projects that we exist, to nurture and protect the green shoots of such initiatives, to foster peace by promoting international collaboration through science, education and culture.

At the time of turbulence that we are living today, this has never been so important.

When we hear that different people or nations cannot work together centres like SESAME in the Middle East, or CERN in Europe, launched also by UNESCO over 60 years ago, are here to remind everyone that cooperation exists, is alive and bears fruit.

I believe this is important for the region – but it is important for the whole world, and today, UNESCO is more determined than ever to continue in this spirit.

I believe this is the message that we hear today by launching SESAME and this is the message for the future.

Thank you and good luck for the future.